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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SAUDI ARABIAN

F-15 ENHANCEMENTS AND AWACS

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Regional and Political Considerations

Question 1

(U) What impact would the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia have on the military stability in the region? In particular, as a potential adversary of Israel in another Middle East war, what capability would AWACS give Saudi, Syrian and possible Jordanian air forces individually? Would thir require significant purchases of counter-measures on the part of Israel to neutralize the potential offensive capability associated with AWACS?

Response

(U) The sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabis will have a minimum impact on the military stability in the region. Similar technology already exists in the region; the Saudi's will acquire only 5 AWACS allowing them to continuously patrol only one border area at a time for limited periods of time.

(U) As the deployment of USAF AWACS to Saudi Arabia has demonstrated, the added warning of a potential air attack which these aircraft provide is a stabilizing influence during periods of increased tension. During the Iran-Iraq war, AWACS has helped to deter the belligerents from attacking Saudi Arabia's oil facilities and other installations.

(U) In the event of another Middle East war involving Israel, the Saudis would be very unlikely to employ AWACS opposite Israel. Such an employment would expose their AWACS to the very real threat of being shot down by Israeli fighters. It would also leave largely unprotected the most important Saudi economic and population centers in the northeast and southwest.

(U) Extensive joint training exercises would be required for the Saudi AWACS to be effectively used in support of a combined Saudi, Syrian, and Jordanian offensive threat against Israel. Saudi Arabia could not conduct such joint training without our knowledge, since much AWACS aircraft maintenance support will be provided by US contractors for the foreseeable future. Additionally, for such combined operations to be truly effective, Syria and Jordan would need unique communications and encipherment equipment compatible with the AWACS, which could only be provided by the United States -- something we do not intend to do.

(C) Moreover, a Saudi AWACS operating close to Israel would provide data of very limited usefulness to the Saudis, Jordanians, or Syrians. Jordanian and Syrian ground-based radars already provide extensive coverage of Israeli airspace.

(U) No significan counter-measures on the part of Israel would be required to neutralize the potential offensive capability associated with AWACS. Israeli radars and sensors would be capable of detecting the Saudi AWACS aircraft operating near enough to participate in offensive operations against Israel. Israeli F-15 aircraft equipped with the AIM-9L and AIM-7F would be a significant threat to the Saudi AWACS if it attempted to remain on station near Israel.

(U) The most effective use of the Saudi AWACS will be its deep look surveillance capability for early warning and its ability to retreat within the Kingdom's boundaries and assist in the directing of the Saudi fighters against attacking aircraft attempting to penetrate Saudi airspace. It is in this air defense role that we expect the Saudis to employ the AWACS. The Iran/Iraq conflict proved that the potential threat to Saudi oil facilities was real and urgent. Without AWACS, the Saudi's air defenses are virtually blind, unable to detect attacking aircraft, particularly low-flying ones, and provide warning in sufficient time to respond effectively. With AWACS, the Saudis will have the capability to effectively use both the F-15 and F-5 aircraft to intercept hostile aircraft prior to reaching their designated targets and maximize the early warning to surface-to-air missile (SAM) defenses near the target areas.

Question 2

(C) What would be the impact on an Israel-Arab war if the Arab forces had AWACS?

Response

(C) If the Saudis employed AEW aircraft in such a war, and if the Saudis had a detailed plan of cooperation with other Arabs, it would extend radar surveillance in support of air defense, counter air, and limited offensive (interdiction) operations. However, without procedures and, more important, equipment for interoperability and connectivity as well as intensive joint (inter-Arab) training in their use, its effectiveness would be limited. This equipment would have to include sophisticated computerized communications and data processing gear. Even if these severe obstacles were to be overcome, the primary contribution of an Arab AWACS would still be in defensive operations.

Question 3

data as of 1 Feb 1981

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Question 4

(U) Doesn't the F-15 enhancement decision and the initial Congressional and Israeli reactions to it highlight the difficulty of putting together a regional anti-Soviet strategy that must, in part depend on regional countries with conflicting goals?

Response

(U) Our strategy as a whole is geared to deal with the one threat the Israelis cannot handle on their own, the Soviet threat; to the extent that these sales to Saudi Arabia further our strategy in the region -- as we believe they do, they will in the long run make Israel more and not less secure.

Question 5

(U) Is it correct that the F-15's can be effectively used against targets in Israel?

Response

(U) The RSAF could attempt to attack targets with or without any improvements to the present F-15 configuration. In theory, an "enhanced" F-15 could have a higher probability of successfully conducting certain kinds of missions against targets in Israel. In practice, however, how effective such an attack would be is highly questionable since Israel has a highly effective air defense system and Saudi F-15 main operating bases are not near Israel. The RSAF F-15s could expect to encounter a superior, highly trained and experienced Israeli Air Force consisting of several hundred F-15, F-16, F-4, and KRIF aircraft before crossing Israel's border. In addition, the Israeli ground-to-air defense (surface-to-air missiles and air defense artillery) is substantial and would more likely take a heavy toll on any strike aircraft.

(U) Another deterrent against any RSAF agression towards Israel would be the almost certain reprisal from the Israeli Air Force against very vulnerable targets within Saudi Arabia. The relatively small RSAF force could not hope to succeed against an Israeli Air Force that is superior in numbers, training, and equipment.

Question 6

(U) What capabilities for offensive action against Israel did Saudi Arabia have in 1978? What capabilities will they have with the F-15 enhancement plus AWACS?

Response

(S) The F-15s sold to Saudi Arabia in 1978 to be delivered in the 1981-1984 time frame will provide the Saudis with an improved air defense capability over that provided by the Lightnings if the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) is sold the conformal fuel tanks and aerial tanker aircraft to refuel the F-15s in flight, the capability theoretically would exist to reach any target in Israel with a bomb load of five general purpose bombs.

Question 7

(U) Some parts of the Saudi request pose greater threat to Israel than others. To what extent was this fact a part of your review of this issue? Could you review each item requested by the Saudis and evaluate its possible military impact on Israel?

Response

(S) In sum, during our deliberations on this matter, we recognized that these systems, in the abstract, do provide Saudi Arabia with additional military capability. While it is not possible to rule out absolutely the use of Saudi F-15s equipped with enhancement items against Israel, an objective analysis would rate both the likelihood of such use, and the probability of success in the unlikely event such use occurred, to be quite low.

Question 8

(U) What have the Saudis said to us which bears on Israeli concerns as to the enhancement package? Have we sought and have the Saudis given any assurances, beyond those already given in regard to the F-15s themselves?

Response

(U) The Saudis have consistently assured us that they have no offensive intentions against any state in the area. The Saudis have also emphasized that their need for the enhancement package is for defensive purposes.

(U) Beyond these assurances, our maintenance and support role for the Saudi F-15s will give us critical practical control over their use.

(U) Given these factors, we have neither sought nor have the Saudis given any additional assurances.

Question 9

(U) Our calculations indicate that with the conformal fuel tank, a round-trip F-15 mission from Taif could reach Jerusalem only on an air-to-air mission and not for bombing missions. Can you confirm these calculations?

Response

(U) These calculations are correct. The distance from Taif to Jerusalem is approximately 680 Nautical Miles (NM). In a typical air-to-air mission, an F-15 with Conformal Fuel Tanks (CFT) and two 600 gallon External Fuel Tanks (EFT) (maximum fuel load), has a combat radius of about 850 NM. Therefore, Jerusalem is within this operating range. For practical purposes, (Hi-Lo-Hi) profile, and an air-to-ground configuration, Jerusalem is outside the F-15's combat radius even with conformal fuel tanks. This is because:

- aircraft armed with air-to-ground munitions consume more fuel than when armed with air-to-air missiles; and

- low altitude penetration (necessary in a high-threat environment such as Israel) consumes more fuel.

Question 10

(U) How do you assess Israel's current and projected capabilities to defend itself against a coordinated Arab attack?

Response

(U) It is our judgment that with a sustained effort and US assistance, Israel will be able to maintain its margin of military superiority over the Arab states during at least the next five years, and will remain capable of defeating any combination of Arab forces. Nonetheless, improvements in Arab military capabilities could make Israel's military preparations for a possible future conflict more complex and more costly.

Question 11

(U) To what extent have you condsulted with the Israelis on this request? What specific concerns have they expressed? Some see the Israeli reaction as surprisingly muted. Has the Administration pressed the Israelis to withhold comment?

Response

[redacted]

Question 12

(U) What steps can be taken to help maintain Israel's faith in US commitments if the 1978 assurances to Congress are broken?

Response

(U) We believe it is important that our friends can count on our reliability. We presently are consulting extensively with Congress and with Israel on the changed circumstances of the situation in the Middle East. We have asked the Congress to consider with us whether the 1978 undertaking continues to serve US interests given the radically worsened strategic situation in the region and our new strategy for dealing with it. We have explained our views in detail in our discussions with Israel.

(U) We do not believe that it is proper to characterize the transfer of these items as breaking the 1978 assurances. In fact we believe consultations and discussions such as these are most effective way to ensure that Israel recognizes that our commitment to its continued security is firm and unshakable. Our consultations are intended to convey to Israel that our new overall strategy will enable us to make good on our commitment to its security, and that of our other friends in the area, in a much more effective way than we could before.

Question 13

(U) If the F-15 enhancements are sold to Saudi Arabia, do you see a need to take compensatory measures in regard to Israel, such as giving additional military equipment or giving more help with financial problems?

Response

(U) We are not taking compensatory measures with Israel as part of the sale of F-15 add-on equipment to Saudi Arabia. However, because of the changed situation in the region, and because Israel's strength is one factor in our overall strategy for resisting the Soviet thrust into this area. We will continue to discuss the security needs of Israel in the 1980's as part of our ongoing dialogue.

Question 14

[redacted]

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(S) General JOnes further noted:

> I would consider 60 F-15s an element. I would consider them as air defense aircraft with an extremely low potential for offense. In a way, I would have no concern about being able to handle them in the extremely unlikely event that the Saudis would make a mistake and go with a very limited capability offensively.

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a5

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(S) How can you reconcile the cited testimony as well as other testimony in 1978 dowplaying the threat to Israel proposed by the F-15s with the current testimony that the F-15s, if that will be the equipment even without this sale, will be able "rather handily" to strike targets in Israel?

Response

(S) The testimony of General Jones in 1978 very accurately pointed out the folly of a plan to strike Israel with the F-15s we are providing. General Secord's comment that the F-15 can reach Israel simply address the range of the aircraft, not the advisability of such an attack. Since the range of the aircraft is unchanged, we see no contradiction in the testimony in question. In fact, General Secord also pointed out numerous times in subsequent testimony that it would be foolhardy for the Saudis to attack Israel.

Question 15

(U) Aren't the prospects for Saudi stability as poor as Iran's were?

Response

(U) For a variety of reasons including size of population, historic experience, legitimacy and broad public acceptance of the ruling order, the relationship of the regime to the national religion the Saudi experience is not comparable to that of Iran.

(U) Saudi society has demonstrated a high degree of adaptability while undergoing rapid economic and social change.

(U) The Saudi leadership remains in close contact with its people and has sought to carry forward national development while maintaining and strengthening its commitment to the Islamic values of the society.

(U) In fact, Saudi Arabia has been one of our most stable friends. We believe that the incident last year at the Grand Mosque in Mecca was an aberration that does not reflect any widespread dissatisfaction among the Saudi populace.

Question 16

(U) Will the Department be doing anything about closing the PLO office?

Response

(U) By way of background, the PLO Information Office, which was opened in 1978, listed the Palestine Liberation Organization as its "foreign principal" and has been registered with the Justice Department, in accord with the Foreign Agents Registration Act as amended. As long as the office regularly files reports on its activities as an agent of a foreign organization with the Justice Department, complies with all other relevant laws, and is staffed by Americans or legally resident aliens, it is entitled to operate under the protection the First Amendment provides. Because of our law, there is no legal way to close the Palestine Information Office in Washington.

(U) The State Department has not dealt and will not deal with officials of the Palestine Information Office in accord with long-standing US policy against recognition of or negotiation with the PLO so long as the PLO does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Question 17

(U) In view of the Reagan Administration's aim to cut back on foreign aid spending, would not a lifting of US restrictions on Israeli military export sales be the most efficient way to lessen Israel's dependence on our aid?

Response

(U) An economically viable defense industry in Israel is extremely important to Israel's security. In this connection, the Israelis attack great importance to the US attitud toward licensing exports of Israeli military equipment containing US components, such as the KFIR fighter. We intend to be as forthcoming as we can to Israeli requests to seek such sales.

Question 18

(U) To what extent have you consulted with the Saudis as you assessed this package? Have they indicated any flexibility?

Response

(U) We have been aware for some time of Saudi interest in obtaining additional equipment to enhance the capabilities of their F-15's and also obtaining an aerial early warning and surveillance capability. Over the past several months we and the Saudis have had several discussions about this matter.

(U) We are continuing this dialogue with the Saudis and anticipate jointly working out with them the particular mix and amount of additional military equipment best suited to meet their desire for improved air defense capabilities. Neither we nor the Saudis have reached final decisions on all aspects of their military needs.

Question 19

(U) This discussion has centered on various pieces of equipment, such as:

- AIM-9L missiles -- sophisticated missiles that are more advanced than their Sidewinder predecessors (able to be fired from any angle).

- Multiple ejection bomb racks -- bomb racks which greatly increase the planes' offensive capability.

- FAST-packs -- fuel tanks which would give the planes range to hit most targets in Israel.

- Air tankers.

What is the likelihood of the Saudis being sold all of these items? Any combination of these items? Any other its?

Response

(U) The Administration has announced that notification will shortly be given to Congress of our intention to sell Saudi Arabia conformal fuel tanks (CFTs, or FAST-packs) and AIM-9L air-to-air missiles which will augment the defensive role of their F-15 aircraft. The Administration has also indicated a willingness to be responsive on providing the Saudis with an aerial refueling capability, and will be working with the Saudis to determine the most effective means of doing this. Finally, the Administration has made no decision concerning multiple bomb racks, but has agreed to conduct a technical study with the Saudis to determine their air-to-ground requirements for defending against the threat of invasion.

(U) With respect to any additional items to be sold to the Saudis, the Administration has also announced a willingness to sell to Saudi Arabia aerial surveillance aircraft, subject to further determination of their specific requirements.

Question 20

(U) Does every part of the Saudi royal family support this sale? If the sales were rejected, what impact would it have on internal Saudi politics?

Response

Question 21

(U) To what degree do you think the Saudis see these sales in political terms as a test of will -- as opposed to their military requirements for this equipment?

Response

(C) The Saudis believe that there is a pressing military need to enhance the capabilities of their F-15 aircraft and to acquire an airborne early warning capability. They see this need as arising out of the charged military situation in the area, including the increased Soviet threat exemplified by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

(C) The Saudis believe it essential that they possess an improved air defense capability to deter external attack.

(C) The Saudis do not see this a "test of the will" with the United States although our response inevitably will be viewed by the Saudis as an indication of US willingness to work together in pursuit of our common security objectives against the Soviet advance. They believe that the US shares an interest in the stability of the region and the defense of the Saudi oil facilities and that it is in our joint interest to improve Saudi Arabia's ability to protect its strategically important natural resources.

Question 22

(U) Aren't we just formenting a new stage in the arms race in the Middle East?

Response

(U) Saudi Arabia possesses the smallest military forces of any major state in Southwest Asia. Because the size of its military is constrained by the relatively small size of its population, Saudi Arabia has concentrated its efforts to acquire higher technology arms systems that multiply the effectiveness of its smaller armed forces.

-- The F-15 enhancement items and AWACS we propose to sell to the Saudis will significantly improve Saudi Arabia's ability to defend its vital natural resources.

-- There is no reason why the sale of this equipment to improve Saudi air defenses should lead to an arms race in the region. We believe that Israel continues to have a qualitative edge over its Arab neighbors. The U.S. has repeatedly stated that we will ensure that Israel maintains this advantage.

Question 23

(U) To what extent has this prospective sale been discussed with the Europeans? What has been their reaction?

Response

(U) We have not discussed in detail with our European Allies the proposed sales to Saudi Arabia. In general, our allies are favorable to measures which increase Saudi Arabia's defense capabilities as a contribution to the protection of vital Western interests in the region. Recognizing the contribution of AWACS to stability in the region, our Allies supported our deployment of US AWACS to Saudi Arabia last September.

Question 24

(U) Could you detail for us the specific circumstances that have changed since May, 1978 which warrant changing the F-15 assurances contained in Secretary of Defense Brown's letter?

Response

(U) As Under Secretary Buckley described for the Committee on February 26, the profoundly worsened security situation in the Middle East/Persian Gulf region requires that we reassess and vigorously respond to the security needs of our friends. In describing this new approach, Under Secretary Buckley highlighted the events that have occurred in the region since 1978:

"-- The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. There are currently 85,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan with an additional 35,000 troops actively engaged in support roles just over the Soviet border. As a result, Soviet tactical aircraft are now within range of the Hormuz Straits, through which 2/3 of the world's oil exports must pass."

-- The Iranian revolution which has turned a nation which once was an important factor in regional security into a major element of instability in the area. We are of course concerned about the potential for Soviet exploitation of the situation in Iran.

-- The Iran/Iraq war has demonstrated again the volatility of the region and the propensity of two major states there to resort to military force and two attacks on critical oil facilities.

Add to these dramatic events the Soviet Union's position in Ethiopia and South Yemen: both of these Marxist states are tied to the Soviet Union and to each other by treaties of friendship and cooperation in which military cooperation is stated explicitly and prominently.

In sum, the Soviets have achieved a position which states in the region have long feared: an encirclement of the major Middle East oil fields, which threatens both the peoples of that area and the well-being of the industrial democracies.

Question 25

(U) Do you consider that any of the May, 1978 assurances are valid and binding upon this Administration?

Response

(U) We take assurances of this kind very seriously. It is the dramatically changed circumstances in the region and our own new strategy that have caused us to consult with the Congress regarding the assurances provided by the previous Administration in the May 8, 1978 letter from Secretary Brown. Apart from our decision to sell Conformal Fuel Tanks and AIM 9L Missiles to Saudi Arabia and later to provide early warning aircraft and an aerial refueling capability, we have not modified the positions that Secretary Brown outlined for the Congress.

Question 26

(U) If these sales are made, what quid pro quo will be obtained by the U.S.? Will there be a willingness to allow American troops to be stationed in Saudi Arabia? Will there be covert support for President Sadat? Will the Saudis drop their objections to the U.S. filling its strategic petroleum reserves? Will there be true price moderation on the price of crude oil? Will the Saudis join the Camp David peace process? Will the Saudis display the F-15 fleet along the Persian Gulf, not inland nor near the Gulf of Aqaba?

Response

(U) The sales of this equipment will contribute to an important and longstanding U.S. objective -- the security of Saudi Arabia.

(U) By helping to assure the Saudis' ability to defend themselves, the sales will strengthen their confidence in us and help to build a sense of common interests. As we seek to develop those interests in support of specific issues, we must continue to recognize that preserving Saudi Arabia's own stability requires the Saudi Government to maintain a posture of independence from US policy.

(U) Saudi Arabia supported the U.S. Middle East peace effort up to Sadat's Jerusalem trip and continued to do so, though with misgivings, through the Camp David Summit.

(U) Although Saudi Arabia has not supported the Camp David process, it has consistently reaffirmed its support for a just and comprehensive Middle East peace settlement. The Saudi desire for peace reflects in part deep concern that continued Arab-Israeli tension promotes Soviet and radical influences in the area. As we continue to seek to bring the Saudis into a more constructive posture in the peace process, it is important to sustain their confidence in other aspects of US policy including our willingness to meet Saudi defense requirements.

(U) Saudi Arabia has not publicly supported the concept of a permanent US force presence in the area. It has, however:

-- indicated appreciation of a strong US "over-the-horizon" presence;

-- sought an extensive US military supply and training program;

-- requested deployment of AWACS at the outbreak of the Iraq/Iran war; and

-- been strongly supportive of Oman and Bahrain, which provide our forces access.

(U) The Saudis have long opposed the spread of Soviet influence generally and in the Middle East in particular. They helped get the Soviets out of Egypt, Sudan, and Somalia.. In Yemen the Saudis have worked with us to support the economic and defense needs of North Yemen, threatened by Marxist, Soviet-supported South Yemen. The Saudis have taken the initiative in bolstering Pakistan and welcoming our cooperation in this effort. The close US-Saudi relationship has encouraged the smaller Gulf states from Kuwait to Oman to cooperate with the United States.

(U) Saudi Arabia is critical to our economic objectives. While neither we nor they see benefit in direct trade-offs, we have long urged their cooperation in energy and financial matters and have received it to a remarkable degree.

(U) Over the past years, Saudi Arabia has consistently maintained significantly higher oil production that is preferred level, most recently in response to supply shortages resulting from the Iraq/Iran war.

(U) Saudi Arabia has been a price moderate within OPEC. For extended periods -- as at present -- it has priced its crude well below the general OPEC level. One could interpret this as subsidizing Western purchases of oil.

(U) These production and pricing policies are increasingly criticized in Saudi Arabia. It is obvious that the Saudis will be more responsive when we demonstrate sustained concern for their national defense.

(U) The Saudis currently devote a high percentage (almost 10%) of their GNP to foreign assistance. (The US percentage is 0.2%.) This policy supports many of our own security and development objectives in the immediate region and globally. Saudi assistance has been particularly important to Morocco, the Sudan, and Jordan. In the coming months we will need to urge even greater Saudi lending, particularly toward key nations suth as Turkey and Pakistan.

(U) The Saudis have consistently supported the dollar. Currently a large proportion of their more than $100 billion in foreign official assets is in dollar instruments.

(U) We need a strong overall relationship to sustain a general Saudi attitude of cooperation in these areas.

(U) The Saudis plan to base their F-15s at three main operating bases: at Dhahran, on the Persian Gulf coast; at Taif, in the west-central portion of the country near Jidda; and at Khamis Mushayt, in the south-western corner of the Kingdom near Yemen.

Question 27

(U) What quid have we received from the Saudis? When will the "special relationship" be tested two ways rather than one?

Response

(U) The U.S.-Saudi relationship is mutually beneficial. It is incorrect to state that the Saudis gain more than the United States from this relationship.

-- The Saudis maintain that a number of their policies have significantly supported U.S. interests:

- maintaining oil production higher than preferred levels (for example, increasing production to 10 mbpd to offset shortages resulting from the Iran-Iraq war);

- pricing of Saudi crude oil well below the general OPEC level;

- devoting a high percentage (almost 10%) of their GNP to foreign assistance which in many cases complements U.S. efforts to support moderate regimes;

- taking the lead in organizing regional opposition to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan;

-- We believe that the sale of this equipment to Saudi Arabia will improve the prospects for even greater mutually beneficial cooperation between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

Question 28

(U) Isn't the Saudi request for AWACS being approved because they have us over the oil barrel and they seek the latest equipment whatever their real need?

Response

(U) Both we and the Saudis are convinced that there is a sound military justification for the sale of AWACS to the Kingdom. The outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq, and the belligerents' use of airpower to destroy each other's oil facilities, highlighted to the Saudis the potential vulnerability of their oil facilities and other installations to air attack. The AWACS will provide a major boost for Saudi air defense capabilities in this vital area that cannot be achieved by any other means.

-- Neither we nor the Saudis have ever established a direct linkage between arms sales and oil pricing or production. However, we believe that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia share a common interest in a continuing arms supply relationship, as well as cooperation in oil pricing and production policies.

Question 29

(U) If the Saudis do not get this equipment will we see another oil embargo?

Response

(U) There would be substantial negative consequences in refusing to provide the F-15 enhancement items. It would be out of character, however, for Saudi Arabia to retaliate in some direct overt fashion against the U.S. should these sales be turned down. We believe the Saudi reaction, however, would be one of deep

disappointment and disillusionment. Without confidence in the reliability of our commitment to their security, the Saudis may well lack the political will to take difficult decisions regarding regional security, oil production and pricing policy, international financial cooperation, and Middle East peace.

Failure to supply this equipment would be seen as a rebuff of the Saudi regime not only in Saudi Arabia itself, but in the wider Arab world. This could damage the position of the royal family and Saudi Arabia's ability to pursue policies in consonance with our own. It would diminish the expectations other Arab states might hold out for themselves as a consequence of closer relations with us.

The Saudis have already indicated they might cancel the F-15 sale and turn to the French should we decline to sell these items. They have recently concluded a $3.5 billion naval buy from the French, a clear political signal of future intentions should we prove ourselves unreliable as a security partner. (There has even been talk of a possible Saudi purchase of French Mirage 4000 fighter aircraft.) The loss of our leading military supply and training relationship in Saudi Arabia would constitute serious damage to one of our most important assets in achieving our regional security objectives.

Question 30

(U) What do you believe the Saudis would do if these sales are not approved? Have they indicated any positive actions they might take in response to a US decision to sell the package? How might they respond to a compromise?

Response

(C) These sales are one part of an overall strategy by which we want to convince the Saudis that we are very seriously committed to defending our friends in the region against the danager of the Soviet Union and the forces it controls. If, over the long term, we fail to convince Saudi Arabia of this commitment, might see a dangerous evolution in Saudi Arabia of this commitment, might see a dangerous evolution in Saudi attitudes away from us.

(C) With regard to this particular part of our strategy, we would not expect Saudi Arabia to retaliate in some direct overt fashion against the US should we fail to supply these items. We believe the Saudi reaction rather would be one of deep disappointment and disillusionment. It would be at the critical margins of the relationship that our interests would suffer. Without confidence in the reliability of our commitment to the country's security, the Saudis may find it politically more difficult to take hard -- but from our standpoint necessary -- decisions regarding regional security oil production and supply, international financial cooperation, and Middle East peace.

(C) While neither we nor the Saudis expect direct linkages or trade-offs, we believe that helping to provide for Saudi security improves the atmosphere in which we seek increasing Saudi cooperation in our strategy for securing the region against Soviet aggression.

Question 31

(U) Will the intelligence "take" be shared?

Response

Although the AWACS, like other aircraft, has onboard radio receivers, it does not possess radio monitoring, photo reconnaissance, or other intelligence gathering capabilities. Therefore, there will be no "intelligence take" per se from the Saudi AWACS.

onstitute a threat to Israeli interests as well as those of the United States.

(U) Operational Saudi AWACS missions would provide radar coverage of aircraft and shipping activities in specific sectors of Saudi border areas. We expect that as part of our broader security relationship with Saudi Arabia we will be cooperating closely with the Saudis in AWACS operations. Specific arrangements for joint AWACS operations and data sharing are now being worked out with the Saudis. These will be presented to Congress during our upcoming consultations.

Question 32

(U) Have they been asked to give written assurances or, only verbal assurances? In either event, what is the precise language of any assurances which you consider firm? How binding do you consider these assurances to be?

Response

(U) The Saudi Arabian Government (SAG) has provided both written and verbal assurances.

- The Letter of Offer and Acceptance (DD Form 1513) for the F-15 aircraft, signed by the SAG, contains several conditions of sale, including restrictions on use of the equipment and upon retransfer of the equipment or data to a Third Country without prior approval of the US Government (USG). In all our conversations with the Saudis, they have consistently indicated that they will abide by the provisions under which the USG supplies military equipment.

- In addition to the specific security clauses of the contract between the US and Saudi Governments (the DD Form 1513), there is a General Security of Information Agreement being developed which provides specific procedures for access to classified information, periodic inspections, and physical security, as well as assurance that the Saudi Arabian Government will provide a degree of protection to any classified information equivalent to the protection afforded it by the US Government.

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a-3

b-1
c-3

- Since 1978, the Saudis have consistently reassured us that they have no aggressive intentions against any state in the area, that their F-15s will be used only in furtherance of their legitimate self-defense needs, and that they will not employ the aircraft offensively.

Question 33

(U) Please list, by type, quantity and dollar cost, the equipment and services contracted for by Saudi Arabia since January 1, 1978 and the dates delivered or scheduled for delivery.

Response

(U)

SAUDI MILITARY SERVICE	TYPE ITEMS	ESTIMATED COST	DELIVERY PERIOD
Saudi Arabian Land Forces (SDLF)	Weapons and related support items	$61,244,000	CY 1981-1985
	Ammunition	76,000,000	CY 1980-1984
	Missiles and related support items	117,000,000	CY 1980-1984
	Field Equipment and uniform items	35,000,000	CY 1979-1983
	Medical Supplies and equipment	777,000	CY 1978-1981
	Miscellaneous support items	52,000,000	CY 1981-1982
	Vehicles	460,000,000	CY 1980-1984
	Troop Support items	557,000	CY 1981-1983
	Communications/ electronic and related support	105,000,000	CY 1981-1984
	Items publications	1,175,000	CY 1980-1981
	Miscellaneous open-ended cases	235,000,000	CY 1981-1982
	Services	915,000,000	CY 1979-1982
SALF Total		2,058,753,000	

SAUDI MILITARY SERVICE	TYPE ITEMS	ESTIMATED COST	DELIVERY PERIOD
Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG)	SANG Modernization (PM-SANG)	136,500,000	CY 1982-1985
	Contractor services	561,508,000	CY 1982-1985
	Training Aids	350,000	CY 1982-1985
SANG Total		698,358,000	
Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF)	Support and Management Services	847,000,000	CY 1979-1982
	Training and Training Equipment	204,700,000	CY 1979-1982
	Spare Parts	154,000,000	CY 1979-1983
	Communications Equipment and Repair Services	4,600,000	CY 1979-1982
	Missiles	160,300,000	CY 1982
	Ammunition	24,400,000	CY 1982
RSNF Total		1,395,000,000	
Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF)	62 F-15 Aircraft and support	4,277,625,000	CY 1982-1984
	Continuing support and Services for F-5 Aircraft	1,356,567,500	CY 1979-1982
	Mobile Ground Radars and support	39,234,000	CY 1979-1982
	Training	36,172,000	CY 1981-1984
	Munitions	128,458,000	CY 1980-1984
	Miscellaneous Services, Equipment and Support	119,723,000	CY 1980-1984
RSAF Total		5,957,779,000	

SAUDI MILITARY SERVICE	TYPE ITEMS	ESTIMATED COST	DELIVERY PERIOD
Ministry of Defense (MODA) (All Services)	Construction Projects	5,065,579,000	CY 1978-1982

Totals	
SALF	2,058,753,000
SANG	698,358,000
RSNF	1,395,000,000
RSAF	5,957,779,000
MODA	5,065,579,000
	$ 15,175,469,000

Question 34

(U) Please list military equipment and services purchased by Saudi Arabia from other countries since 1 January 1978.

Response

Question 35

(U) What other FMS cases for Saudi Arabia does the Department intend to submit to Congress in the near future?

Response

(U) We anticipate submitting 36b notifications for the following three cases in the near future:

Naval Academy Construction

Design, construction, and related services for the construction of a Saudi naval academy near the Saudi naval base at Jubail. No increase in the number of U.S. military and civilian employees in Saudi Arabia is anticipated in support of this case. The estimated value of this case is $504 million.

SANG Hospital Program

Commercial contractor operation and maintenance of a 500-bed hospital for the Saudi Arabian National Guard for a period of three years. The prime contractor will not be known until the competitive procurement procedures has been completed. Total contractor work force should approximate 3,000 persons, primarily third country nationals. Estimated value of this case is $1.1 billion.

(U) Additional trainingand training support assistance for Saudi Navy personnel entering military training programs in the U.S. during FY 1981-1985. The estimated cost of this case is $54.5 million.

Question 36

(U) What other military hardware is under discussion for sale to Saudi Arabia in addition to this package (TOWs, etc.)?

Response

(U) The Departments of State and Defense are currently processing Saudi requests for the purchase of AN/TPQ-36 and 37 mortar and artillery locating radars; a commercial alternative to the Mark 12, Mode IV, IFF; night vision devices for ground forces' use; and TOW anti-armor missiles.

(U) In addition, the Saudis have indicated an interest in purchasing STINGER short range SAMs, Division Air Defense System (DIVADS), Infantry Fighting Vehicles, the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), and tanks and other equipment for two additional mechanized Army brigades.

(U) A complete list of those items we expect to submit for Congressional review during FY 1981 has been provided to Congress in accordance with the "Javits Amendment."

Question 37

(U) How do you assess the overall military threat to Saudi Arabia? To what degree does the proposed military equipment enhance their ability to defend against that threat?

Response

(U) The military threat to Saudi Arabia derives from four sources:

-- The Soviet Union against whom the Saudis would, of course, require massive U.S. assistance;

-- Soviet surrogates such as the Cubans working in conjunction with South Yemen;

-- the general volatility of the region; and,

-- the propensity of major powers such as Iraq and Iran to resort to armed force.

(U) The proposed military equipment will act as an important deterrent to local aggression against Saudi Arabia and provide the basis for Saudi defense, and possibly defense cooperation with the U.S., in the event of actual attack.

Question 38

(U) Please compare current and projected Saudi air defense capabilities against: The Soviet Union, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Ethiopia.

Response

Question 39

(U) What is Saudi Arabia's manpower capacity to absorb high technology systems without additional requirements for US technicians? How many US military and civilian personnel are now stationed in Saudi Arabia in connection with previous sales of US military hardware to that country? How many additional US military and civilian personnel will be required to be stationed in Saudi Arabia if the entire package (the AWACS, F-15 enhancement, and KC-135 tankers) is approved?

Response

(U) With the limited population base in Saudi Arabia, some significant contingent of US contractor personnel will be required to remain in-country for the foreseeable future. This is not to imply that Saudi Arabia cannot absorb the high technology systems such as the F-15 and AWACS aircraft. The Saudi's have demonstrated their ability to absorb

and operate he British Lightning fighter aircraft, the F-5E, the C-130, and other systems that are currently in use. Contractor support, however, is being used to augment and support the Saudi maintenance capabilities of these systems. There are approximately 3,200 US military and civilian personnel now stationed in Saudi Arabia in support of the US mission there. It is estimated that approximately 1,750 additional US military and civilian personnel will be employed to support functions of the AWACS and tanker aircraft plus the additional enhancements to the F-15 aircraft and improved AIM-9L missile. It should be emphasized that the F-15 enhancements and AIM-9L missile will not significantly increase the manpower over that identified to support the basic F-15 aircraft and AIM-9 series missiles. This number is based on the maximum predicted and is expected to be gradually phased down as Saudi personnel are qualified on the systems. As stated, however, some contractor support will remain for the foreseeable future.

Question 40

(U) How many U.S. military personnel are required for the support of current and anticipated FMS contracts with Saudi Arabia? How many current and anticipated contract personnel have prior military service? How many of these personnel have military specialties in which U.S. Armed Forces are in short supply? What are the salaries and compensation for contract personnel compared with the salaries and compensation for U.S. military personnel performing similar work?

Response

(U) Approximately 950 U.S. military personnel, assigned to locations in the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, are/will be required to support current and anticipated FMS contracts with Saudi Arabia.

(U) There are no records maintained by the Department of Defense or the Military Departments which identify the military experience or military specialties possessed by contractor personnel supporting FMS contracts with Saudi Arabia.

(U) The compensation package of contractor personnel supporting FMS contracts with Saudi Arabia is considered proprietary information by the companies holding the contracts, and is not available to the Department of Defense or the Military Departments.

Question 41

(U) If Saudi Arabia becomes involved in armed conflict and it is determined that U.S. personnel necessary for the support or operation of U.S. provided equipment are not to be involved, how will U.S. personnel and sensitive technologies and components be protected?

Response

(U) The Saudi Arabian Government (SAG) has agreed to afford U.S. provided equipment with sensitive technologies and components the same level of protection as provided by the U.S. Government. We have no reason to believe the SAG has failed to fulfill its responsibilities in the past, nor do we believe the SAG will fail to fulfill its responsibilities during a conflict.

(U) Physical protection of U.S. personnel would be dependent on the scenario envisioned, and keyed to such variables as the warning time required to remove personnel, the nature of the conflict, the vulnerability to actual danger, the identity of the opponent force(s), etc. However, in all but minor contingencies, continued U.S. support of a non-combatant nature would be needed by the Saudis if they were to continue military operations for an extended period of time. In such cases, we feel confident of our ability, and that of the Saudis, to protect US personnel and technologies.

Question 42

(U) From comments made recently by Secretary of Defense Weinberger and others, we know that the Administration is weighing the possibility of selling certain offensive equipment to the Saudi Arabians for their yet to be delivered F-15 planes.

(U) What will be the delivery schedule on these planes?

Response

(U) The first six (of a total of 62) Saudi Arabian F-15s are scheduled to be delivered to Luke AFB, outside Phoenix, Arizona, beginning in September 1981 to accommodate initial Saudi F-15 pilot training. All six of these aircraft are then to be delivered to Saudi Arabia approximately one year later. The first in-country deliveries of F-15s to Saudi Arabia are currently scheduled to begin in January 1982 and run through the second quarter of CY 84 (only 60 F-15s are to be delivered to Saudi Arabia; the remaining two aircraft will be retained in the US as attrition spares).

Question 43

(U) What was the configuration and capabilities of the F-15s previously sold to the Saudis?

Response

- (U) The Saudi F-15 capabilities will be the same as those of the US F-15s. They will be armed with 4 AIM-7F Sparrows (medium range radar missiles) and a 20mm M-61 internal cannon with 940 rounds. Additionally, it has three hard-points (one under each wing and one on the fuselage center-line) with standard mounting for attaching external stores (i.e., fuel tanks, air-to-ground munitions, gun pods, etc.). Air-to-ground munitions are not carried by US F-15s since we do not employ the aircraft in that role. However, the aircraft and systems are fully capable of carrying and dropping those type munitions.

Question 44

(U) What will the configuration and capability of the F-15s either previously sold or to be sold to the Saudis as a result of the recent decision to provide enhancements, their capabilities will be increased.

- (U) Conformal Fuel Tanks (CFTs) fit alongside the fuselage, under the wing, and provide an additional 9750 pounds of fuel. These bolt on tanks are interchangeable and easily mounted on the ground, but cannot be jettisoned airborne. The advantage of these tanks is that they increase range/endurance of the aircraft 40-70% (depending on type mission and profile) with very little reduction in performance (empty weight is insignificant, as is subsonic drag - supersonic drag is equal to one external 600 gallon tank).

- (U) AIM-9L is an all aspect, improved version of the Sidewinder that the Saudis have purchased for their F-15s and now have on their F-5 aircraft (AIM-9P-3). The significance of this enhancement is that with the AIM-9L the F-15 has a near head on infrared capability. Consequently, their probability of kill in an engagement is improved, vulnerability is decreased, and their ability to defend with a limited number of aircraft is greatly increased.

- (U) Multiple Ejection Racks (MER) expand the capacity of each of the three hard-points stations to carry a greater number of air-to-ground munitions. MERS would greatly increase the aircraft's flexibility and allow it to "swing" to the air-to-ground role against area targets (such as a mobile force, troops in the open, or close air support), as the need arose. In its present configuration the F-15 could carry one air-to-ground munition on each of its three stations. Three MK-84 2000 pound bombs could be carried and would represent an effective load for point targets. However, loading three area type munitions would be an unsatisfactory load for attacking area targets (these munitions are small, designed to spread over large areas, and must be carried in large numbers to be effective). MERs would allow up to six area type munitions to be carried on each station, or a total of 18. If the F-15 were modified, it is possible to add MERs to each of the two (2) CFTs. In this configuration the maximum that could be carried is 22; however, the AIM-7 missile could not be carried; and the F-15 would lose much of its self protection.

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- Tankers, or an aerial refueling capability that is compatible with the F-15 will increase the aircraft's range, but more importantly its endurance or cap time will also be increased. This is important for two reasons:

a. Maintaining an airborne cap for any length of time, places extremely high demands on aircraft resources. Extending the duration of flight for the cap aircraft greatly reduces that impact on resources.

b. All three projected F-15 bases are on the periphery of the country, will be prime targets of any attack in their respective regions and any one will probably be unuseable after the first attack. Consequently, all subsequent efforts will probably eminate from the remaining two bases. Without aerial refueling (and CFTs) the distances involved would make defense of the area under attack difficult if not impossible.

- AWACS does not directly affect the capability of the F-15, but does enhance the overall ability of an air defense system to protect the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Question 45

(U) How would you characterize the offensive threat proposed by the F-15s as currently approved versus enhanced F-15s?

Response

(U) The F-15 as currently approved has some offensive air-to-ground capability. It can carry three conventional general purpose bombs which can be delivered in a manual, visually aided, or a fully automatic computer assisted mode. The F-15 (without enhancements) is limited to a single munition carriage on each of the three air-to-ground stations.

(U) With conformal fuel tanks (CFTs) the range and/or patrol times of Saudi F-15s would be increased. The CFTs have an air-to-ground munitions station on each tank which may be used in lieu of the AIM-7 (air-to-air) missile. Each F-15 is configured to carry two CFTs. Thus, two additional conventional bombs could be carried on the F-15 after the aircraft electrical system and armament control system were modified so that these two stations could release ordnance.

(U) The AIM-9-L is an improved air-to-air missile which would allow the RSAF to defend against attacking aircraft from the front quadrant. This would enhance the RSAF's air defense effectiveness somewhat by increasing the flexibility of their tactics and raising the probability of a successful missile engagement.

(U) Likewise, the aerial surveillance and air refueling aircraft are required to enhance defensive capabilities. The aerial surveillance aircraft would enable the RSAF to look beyond its borders and detect attacking aircraft, most importantly at low altitude, thus allowing the RSAF adequate response time to defend against such an attack. The refueling aircraft would provide the RSAF F-15s and aerial surveillance aircraft with more endurance, thus reducing the number of sorties required per day. Additionally, it would enable the RSAF to use bases in the southwestern and central parts of their country to help defend their oil facilities in the Eastern Province (over 800 miles away).

Question 46

(C) How specifically are the Saudis willing to pledge not to operate F-15s from Tabuk or any other forward air field, such as Hail?

Response

(C) The Saudis have consistently assured us that they have no aggressive intentions against any state in the area, that their F-15 aircraft will be used only in furtherance of their legitimate self-defense needs, and that they will not employ the aircraft offensively.

(C) The Saudis have also assured us repeatedly that they will base their F-15s at Dhahran, Taif, and Khamis Mushayt, not at Tabuk or other forward air fields. Basing F-15s at the vulnerable Tabuk air field, or certain other forward bases, for use against Israel would place these vital aircraft, which will be the heart of the Saudi Arabian air defense system, in needless jeopardy. Moreover, supporting F-15 aircraft at forward airfields such as Tabuk and Hail, would require major new facilities and substantial personnel/equipment augmentation.

(C) Beyond these assurances, our maintenance and support role for the Saudi F-15s will give us critical practical control over their use.

(C) Given these factors, we have neither sought nor have the Saudis given any additional assurances or pledges concerning their use of the F-15s.

Question 47

(U) Will the Saudi assurance concerning stationing F-15s at Tabuk be maintained? Is there any evidence that the Saudis want to station F-15s there or expand the hardened aircraft shelters there to accomodate F-15s?

Response

(U) There is no reason to believe the Saudis have modified the assurance they gave us regarding the stationing of F-15s. The Saudis intend to develop Khamis Mushayt, Taif, and Dhahran, not Tabuk, as the main operating bases for the F-15s.

(U) There is no evidence that the Saudis have any plans to base F-15s at Tabuk or to build hardened aircraft shelters there to accomodate the F-15s.

TAB C -- TANKER AIRCRAFT CONSIDERATIONS

Q. 1, Pg. 1 -- Military Justification for Tanker Sale

Q. 2, Pg. 1 -- Use of AWACS Without Tankers

Q. 3, Pg. 2 -- Provision of Tankers from USAF Inventory

Q. 4, Pg. 2 -- Aircraft Refuelable by Saudi Tanker

Q. 5, Pg. 2 -- US Interoperability with Saudi Tanker

Q. 6, Pg. 2 -- Non-US Alternatives to Aerial Refueling Tanker

Question 1. (U) Could you review the specific Saudi military justification for the aerial refueling tanker aircraft they have requested? Do you believe their justification is credible?

Response. (U) Refueling tankers would extend the range and/or mission endurance of Saudi F-15s and improve their ability to carry out air superiority and combat air patrol missions. With this expanded range, the aircraft could stay on patrol longer and could operate effectively from bases in the western part of Saudi Arabia in defense of the eastern oil fields. They would thus be much less vulnerable to attack on the ground by incoming hostile aircraft. Additionally, aerial refueling tankers are required to provide inflight refueling for the Saudi AWACS aircraft, allowing them to stay airborne and on orbit longer, and thus making it possible for five AWACS aircraft to maintain 24 hour orbit coverage for up to seven days during periods of crisis.

(U) The US agrees with this assessment. Without KC-707 tanker aircraft (and conformal fuel tanks), F-15 fighters based in the western part of the Kingdom (where two-thirds of them will be based) would not be able to fly from their home bases and have adequate fuel to fly combat air patrol missions or engage in combat over the Persian Gulf coast to protect the oil facilities, and still return to their home bases in the west (a requirement if the air base at Dhahran on the Persian Gulf coast were knocked out, a likely event if the adjacent oil facilities were attacked). With tanker aircraft, F-15s, could fly such defensive missions, providing more effective and sustained protection for the oil facilities.

(U) Additionally, without KC-707 tanker aircraft, it would not be possible to maintain 24 hour orbit coverage with a fleet of only five AWACS; the Saudis would have to buy additional AWACS to provide the necessary crisis level surveillance coverage.

Question 2. (U) If the Saudis do not get the KC-707 tanker, could they use AWACS effectively?

Response. (U) Yes, the Saudis could still make effective use of AWACS aircraft if an aerial refueling tanker were not made available to them. It would, however, significantly increase the number of AWACS aircraft required to perform a given mission. The unrefueled endurance of AWACS, for example, is 11 hours; an AWACS refueled twice in flight has a flight endurance time of 22 hours. In order to maintain 24-hour surveillance of a given orbit for an extended period of time, approximately five AWACS would be required with aerial refueling, given maintenance requirements and aircraft operational ready rates. Without aerial refueling, this requirement increases to at least ten AWACS. The resultant problems in providing Saudi crew members, controllers, and maintenance personnel to maintain and operate such additional aircraft would exacerbate the already formidable manpower problems facing the Saudi Air Force.

Question 3. (U) The Commander-in-Chief of the Strategic Air Command has testified that "Current air refueling assets are insufficient to carry out even our most fundamental tasks." He has also said that additional assets will be required when B-52s are equipped with air launched cruise missiles and for other tactical missions. Does the US Government plan to provide the Saudis with KC-135s from our current inventories? How many? What impact, and over what time period, will this have on USAF mission requirements?

Response. (U) There is no plan to provide the Saudis with KC-135 tanker aircraft from our current inventories. Further, the KC-135 is no longer in production. What is proposed is the sale of newly produced KC-707 tanker aircraft. The KC-707 is a derivative of the Boeing 707 airliner, and is essentially the same aircraft as the E-3A AWACS (minus the surveillance avionics suite) with modifications to permit aerial refueling.

Question 4. (U) What aircraft will the Saudi aerial refueling tanker be able to refuel?

Response. (U) The KC-707 will be capable of refueling Saudi F-15 and E-3A AWACS aircraft from the refueling "boom" under the tanker's tail, as well as Saudi F-5 aircraft from the drogue refueling receptacles off of the tankers's wing tip pods. The maximum KC-707 fuel capacity is approximately 185,000 pounds.

Question 5. (U) How would Saudi aerial refueling tanker aircraft be interoperable with US tactical aircraft?

Response. (U) The Saudi KC-707 will be capable of refueling USAF fighter aircraft (F-15, F-16, F-4s, A-10s, etc.), as well as USAF E-3A AWACS, from the refueling "boom." It will also be able to refuel US Navy fighter aircraft (F-14s, F-4s, A-6s, A-7s, etc.) from the drogue refueling receptacles.

Question 6. (U) What other countries, if any, could produce tanker aircraft compatible with the F-15?

Response. (U) No country other than the US currently produces tanker aircraft which can refuel either the F-15 or the E-3A. Both of these aircraft are configured to refuel in flight via a "boom" refueling probe.

(U) If the Saudis were to seek an aerial refueling capability for their F-15s and E-3As from a country other than the US, the only real alternative would be to procure a probe and drogue tanker aircraft and modify their F-15s and E-3As accordingly. The UK and the Soviet Union, as well as the US have produced probe and drogue tankers. Other countries, including France, Italy, and Germany would be capable of modifying commercial aircraft for a probe and drogue tanker role and modifying Saudi F-15s and E-3As accordingly. However, such F-15 and E-3A modifications could not be done without our knowledge.

TAB D -- CONFORMAL-FUEL TANK CONSIDERATIONS

Q. 1, Pg. 1 -- Military Justification for CFT Sale

Q. 2, Pg. 1 -- Non-US Alternatives to CFTs

Q. 3, Pg. 1 -- CFT Air-to-Ground Munitions Stations

Question 1. (U) Could you review the specific Saudi military justification for the conformal fuel tanks (CFT) they have requested for their F-15s? Do you believe their justification is credible?

Response. (U). Conformal fuel tanks are needed to increase the range and/or mission time of the F-15s. The exact amount of increase varies depending upon aircraft mission, flight profile, payload, etc., but generally amounts to an increase of some 40 to 70 percent. This would allow the Saudis to conduct air defense missions over Eastern Province oil facilities from bases in the western part of Saudi Arabia. Without CFTs, Saudi F-15s would have to operate from forward bases near the Persian Gulf to be fully effective, and would be more vulnerable to attack on the ground by hostile aircraft from across the Gulf.

(U) The US agrees with this assessment. Without conformal fuel tanks (and KC-707 tanker aircraft), F-15 fighters based in the western part of the Kingdom (where two-thirds of them will be based) would not be able to fly from their home bases and have adequate fuel to fly combat air patrol missions or engage in combat over the Persian Gulf coast to protect the oil facilities, and still return to their bases in the west (a requirement if the air base at Dhahran on the Gulf coast were knocked out, a likely event if the oil facilities were attacked). With CFTs, F-15s from western Saudi bases would be able to fly such defensive missions, providing more effective and sustained protection for the oil facilities.

Question 2. (U) Could conformal fuel tanks be successfully designed and produced by other countries? Which ones?

Response. (U) As their price of $900,000 a pair suggests, conformal fuel tanks are relatively complex subsystems. They contain electric pumps and sensors which automatically adjust fuel levels in various compartments of the tanks to maintain the aircraft's proper center of gravity. They also permit the mounting and firing of four AIM-7 Sparrow air-to-air missiles or, with modifications to the aircraft's wiring, carriage of air-to-surface ordnance on one store station for each tank.

(U) The design and production of CFTs would be greatly complicated by the absence of manufacturer's specifications. Substitute CFTs would also need to undergo extensive flight testing on F-15s before being employed in operational units. However, given sufficient time and resources, any country with a reasonably capable aircraft industry could probably produce CFTs.

Question 3. (U) The Administration has made no decision on the Saudi request for MER-200 multiple bomb racks for their F-15s. However, is it not true that by acquiring the conformal fuel tanks, the Saudis will gain two additional air-to-ground hard points for their F-15s, and thus an increased bombing capability?

Response. (U) The CFTs do have two hard points for air-to-ground munitions carriage (CFTs are mounted on the F-15 in sets of two, one on each side of the fuselage). Thus, a total of two additional hard points are gained

by fitting CFTs and the munitions load with CFTs would be increased to a total of five bomb stations (i.e., two on CFTs plus one on each of the three existing aircraft stores stations). Three MK-84 2000 pound bombs can already be carried on an F-15 without any modifications or enhancements. Thus the addition of CFTs will only provide an increase in an already existing F-15 ground attack capability. It should be noted, however, that the air-to-ground hard points on the CFTs can only be used at the expense of the four AIM-7F SPARROW air-to-air missiles (either the hard point, or the SPARROW launchers can be used, but not both at the same time), thus detracting from the F-15s primary air superiority mission.